

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2012**

Members Present: Chair Diane Martin, Jean Brookman, Jeff DePina, Carol Cooney, Susan Gardner, Lauralyn Lewis, Lori Richardson, Danielle Sheppard and Thomas Dailey, Regional Director, DDS South Region.

Members Absent: Michael Del Sole and April Dipollina.

Guests: Ms. Okerblom Okerblom, DDS-SR Recreation Therapist, and Charma Howard, Parent.

Chairperson's Report

- **Call to Order and Council Overview** – Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. Next, she provided an overview of the Council for guests.
- **Introductions** – All made Introductions.
- **Public Comment** – None presented.
- **Review of Minutes** - A review ensued of the May 16, 2012, meeting minutes.

In the presence of a quorum and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2012, meeting as presented.

- **Creative Housing Forum Update** – Overall feedback to date has been positive. The forums were a good solid first step in bringing families together to discuss creative housing. Most attendees found the information presented to be valuable. The Creative Housing sub-committee, comprised of representatives from DDS, the RAC, and the FSN, is meeting next week to finalize plans for the next event, a World Cafe, to take place in the fall. Member Lewis expressed her interest in joining the sub-committee. Member Gardner noted that more work needs to be done in marketing and outreach to families. In response to a request for DDS to help distribute flyers to families via email, Mr. Dailey stated that DDS only has approximately 1400 family and consumer email addresses at this time, only a small portion of all families served by DDS. He will double-check on the blast email option. A suggestion to do a postcard mailing to announce the World Cafe was also made.

Mr. Dailey noted that work to make the DDS website more user-friendly by simplifying and streamlining information for end users is underway. A new Provider Gateway is up and running and plans to develop a Family Gateway are on the horizon. The Council is encouraged to visit the site to check out new developments. Mr. Dailey added that when the APD process is completed (3-5 years), DDS will have a web-based, integrated data system.

DDS Recreation – Pam Okerblom, Recreation Therapist, joined the meeting to discuss recreation activities in the SR of DDS. Since joining DDS in 1984, Ms. Okerblom has worked in both recreation and case management. In her current role, she serves as a liaison for connecting consumers and families to existing recreational activities and collaborates with community organizations on development. One of the first things she did in her new role was to conduct a family/consumer survey to identify options and needs. With that information she began publishing a monthly newsletter on recreational events. Her other activities include on-going consultation with families, researching options for families, and working on establishing cooperative programs with providers.

Ms. Okerblom has found transportation and lack of social opportunities for young adults to be some of the biggest barriers to recreation. With this in mind, she has worked on facilitating ride share arrangements and with MARC to address the recreational needs of young adults. Through her work, she has also discovered that families want to meet other families. To address this need, she plans to develop a “Parent Nook” at dances.

Ms. Okerblom asked this Council to identify their needs. Members suggested a need for similar initiatives in the western part of the region, particularly evening and weekend activities. It was noted that there are some agencies in the area that offer activities at a cost. The Groton Parks and Recreation Department has an excellent program that has now become more of a regional program.

The Council would like to see this model mirrored on the western side of the region. Council members would appreciate help in approaching local Parks and Recreation Departments on development and with identifying other cooperative initiatives on this side of the region. Ms. Okerblom said that she would like to reach out to Parks & Recreation Departments, when time allows. She is currently focusing on the Norwich area, but has definite plans to branch out. It was noted that Wallingford Parks and Recreation offers activities for special populations and that challenger bowling is held in East Haven on Sunday mornings.

The Council would also like to see an increase in ridesharing options in the western part of the region. Ms. Okerblom stated that this is usually accomplished through informal networking among families - it is not a DDS service. It was noted that through a grant, The Kennedy Center provides transportation training. Member Cooney said in her experience, it works best when you have a destination in mind.

Following, Ms. Okerblom spoke about Camp Harkness (brochure distributed). She encouraged the Council to take advantage of its many amenities (picnicking, swimming, camping, sensory garden). She also noted that the Camp is home to many annual fundraisers such as the annual Toys for Tots Motorcycle Ride. A suggestion was made to hold a future council meeting there.

Next, discussion focused on how to go about establishing relationships with community organizations that might be interested in connecting with the department through volunteerism. Ms. Okerblom said that while the idea is a good one, vetting volunteers is challenging.

In conclusion, Ms. Okerblom asked the Council to keep her informed of recreational opportunities they hear about, so she can add the information to the newsletter.

Regional Director's Report

- **Position/Hiring Update:**

- Jeanine Pettinico was hired in the position of Assistant Regional Director for Private Administration in the SR of DDS.
- Carin Mancini was selected to serve as the new Assistant Regional Director for Public Administration in the SR of DDS.
- The new Director of the Division of Family Services will start on Friday, whose primary role will be to lead the movement away from DDS' legacy system.
- Director of Autism to be hired soon.
- 33 case managers hired statewide. Seasoned staff provided a comprehensive six-day training.

Discussion centered on waiver enrollment for individuals on the spectrum. The fact that there is no accepted definition for autism makes it difficult for the Department. Diagnosis and eligibility criteria need to be clarified. The new waiver is limited to individuals who were part of the autism pilot.

- **FY13 Budget** - We are starting the FY with a \$2M deficit and there is no new funding. Grads and Age-outs will be funded. This year 74 people served. Bridge funding will not be necessary. In response to a question, Mr. Dailey said that case managers and transition coordinators identify Grads and Age/Outs.

In spite of no new funding, DDS is moving forward in providing services through recycled funds and closing homes, as indicated by FY12 stats.

- **Transportation** - DDS Self Advocate Coordinators have identified transportation as their number 1 goal for the year. They are working with local transit authorities, legislators, private providers, and other state agencies to identify and increase transportation options for people with ID in the state. The ARC of CT has also identified transportation as its primary goal.
- **Hard to Fill Vacancies** – DDS is only funding Emergencies at this point. There are providers that are not used to working with Emergencies and as a result, they are holding on to their vacancies, and losing money because of it. Some are even contemplating closure at this point. In an effort to facilitate the filling of hard to fill vacancies, DDS is pursuing cross-collaboration among providers.

Discussion centered on service rates and the LON. CMS requires uniformed rate systems for states participating in the waiver. Providers have accepted the LON as a valid tool for resource allocation, when filled out correctly (i.e. as if the person has no services).

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Dailey said that DDS discontinued case manager services for anyone who does not have T19 a few years based on funding. In the SR, approximately 1000 consumers do not have a case manager.

- **Emergency Custody** – DDS has developed new guidelines for taking Emergency Custody of an individual. Although unusual, DDS does pursue through the Probate Court System, Emergency Custody of individuals who are involved in extraordinary health and safety situations. A copy of the new guidelines will be shared at the next meeting.
- **Hurricane Drill** – DDS will participate in an Emergency Management Drill designed to mimic the Hurricane of 1938 in July. The Department's approach to Emergency Management drills has changed based on provider feedback. Providers are managing things themselves and are looking more to local authorities for help, as the State is limited in what it has to offer.
- **HRC Volunteers** – The DDS South Region Human Rights Committee (HRC) is in need of volunteers. Chaired by Joanne Bilotta, the Abuse/Neglect Liaison in the SR of DDS, the HRC meets monthly at the Wallingford Office to review components of an individual's program that potentially interfere with his/her human rights. HRC reviews are requested through an individual's case manager.
- **PRC** – The DDS South Region Program Review Committee (PRC) reviews the use of behavior modifying medication, restraint, and restrictive procedures.
- **Five Year Plan** – The next goal to be addressed is consistency within the Department with a focus on PRAT. The Commissioner's office has issued FY13 funding priorities. In priority order, they are:
 1. Emergencies.
 2. Individuals who have Immediate Protective Service Plans (IPSP) through OPA, that require a change in placement or additional resources.
 3. Graduates and age outs.
 4. People on a waiver who have unmet health and safety needs who are either underserved or unserved residentially.
- **FAQ Workgroup** – Commissioner Macy has convened a workgroup to develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) fact sheet for families.

New Business

- **Executive Board Elections** – Executive Board elections were held.

In the presence of a quorum, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the election of Diane Martin, Jean Brookman, and Susan Gardner to the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary respectively, for a term of one year effective this day, June 20, 2012.

- **2012-2013 Council Priorities** - After discussion, the Council identified the following priorities for 2012-2013:
 1. Continue the Creative Housing Initiative
 2. Enhance DDS' communication and outreach to DDS families
 3. Interface with school districts to educate families about DDS and the things they should do as transition from school to work or higher education draws near.
 4. Identify and promote employment options for people with ID

Mr. Dailey suggested inviting to a future meeting Greg McMahon, Self Determination Director, and the newly hired Director of Family Services, to discuss employment and interfacing with school districts respectively, as a place to start.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DDS South Regional Advisory and Planning Council is September 19, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library in Clinton.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by:
Jolie Crescimano-Goss
Executive Secretary, DDS-SR